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AUTHOR Cain, Bonnie C.
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ABSTRACT

Certain philosophical understandings and resulting behaviors will produce an environment conducive to participation or conducive to accepting the definitions of reality of the people involved in the research process. This is an important element of participatory research, a process towards gathering new knowledge with the people capable of defining that knowledge. This method combines research and participation, an involvement of the subjects which is influenced by researcher attitudes and characteristics as well as research methodology. The value system of the researcher influences the possibility of participation. A researcher who would aspire to listen to a subject to mutually develop knowledge must value intuition and sympathetic understanding. Several personal characteristics and interactional patterns of the researcher also influence the quality of participation: (1) reciprocity, (2) vulnerability, (3) understanding of what the participants define as reality, (4) constant refinement of one's perceptions and assumptions, (5) awareness of one's own observational limitations, and (6) attrition of ethnocentrism. Research methods which influence and amplify the nature of participation include sufficient time to deal with the problem, a mode for reflection, and the permanent sequence of analysis, statement, action, reflection analysis. (YLB)

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PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH PROJECT

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WORKING PAPER #3

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH:

Research with Historic Consciousness

by

Bonnie C. Cain

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29 Prince Arthur · Toronto · Ontario · Canada · M5R 1B2

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"It's completely natural," I say,"to think of Europeans who believed in ghosts or Indians who believed in ghosts as ignorant. The scientific point of view has wiped out every other view to a point where they all seem primitive, so that if a person today talks about ghosts or spirits he is considered ignorant or maybe nutty. It's just all but completely impossible to imagine a world where ghosts can actually exist."

.....

"My own opinion is that the intellect of modern man isn't that superior. IQs aren't that much different. Those Indians and medieval men were just as intelligent as we are, but the context in which they thought was completely different. Within that context of thought, ghosts and spirits are quite as real as atoms, particles, photons and quants are to a modern man. In that sense I believe in ghosts. Modern man has his ghosts and spirits too, you know."

"What?"

"Oh, the law of physics and of logic...the number system...the principle of algebraic substitution. These are ghosts. We just believe in them so thoroughly they seem real."

Dialogue from Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance[1].

The concept and practice of participatory research is being developed by educators/researchers as a reaction to the historic abuse and failure of traditional research to ask and answer appropriate and useful questions in the context of development projects in the Third World. Clearly many educators, myself included, feel that this effort - the elaboration of a participatory research process or model - is necessary and possibly unavoidable. However, the fact remains that participatory research has been, thus far, defined negatively in terms of characteristics and actions to avoid or overcome. The developers have yet to outline a clear strategy of how to carry out such an operation. This lack of a clear definition presents a large obstacle to the development and acceptance of participatory research.

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[1]Robert M. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1974), p.32.

Before this definition can be formulated, practitioners must confront the formidable task of rethinking what is research which also implies rethinking what is science. This effort, as well as that demanded to include participants in the research process, requires a researcher with extraordinary qualifications or characteristics: one committed to understanding and controlling his/her ethnocentric biases so that s/he can permit and encourage the subject to define and direct the research effort. To achieve this receptivity to participation, the researcher needs a well-defined research process through which the subjectivity of the "native" will always be kept the foremost consideration.

To explain the need or impetus for participatory research, it is necessary to review the relatively recent past of social science research, and then to examine the history of research connected with development projects. Most social research methods and designs were developed in a period when Western imperialism and cultural disruption and control were rarely moral or ethical considerations. As Claude Levi-Strauss traces the development of one area of social research, anthropology, he makes this point clearly about the "roots" of the science:

> Anthropology is the outcome of a historical process which has made the larger part of mankind subservient to the other, and during which millions of innocent human beings have had their institutions and beliefs destroyed, whilst they themselves were ruthlessly killed, thrown into bondage, and contaminated by diseases they were unable to resist. Anthropology is the daughter of this era of violence. Its capacity to assess more objectively the facts pertaining to the human condition reflects, on the epistemological level, the state of affairs in which one part of mankind treated the other as objects.[2]

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[2]Claude Levi-Strauss, "Anthropology: Its Achievements and Its Future", Current Anthropology, No.2, (1966), p.126.

Anthropologists quickly became aware of the abuse in the subject-as-object approach and strove to develop methods which allowed greater self-definition by the "natives" within their own culture. For instance, Margaret Mead has maintained that a well-conceived participant-observer method avoids treating "natives" as objects:

> Anthropological research does not have subjects. We work with informants in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect....It stresses not only the importance of the relationship between a research worker and those among whom he seeks new knowledge, but also the possibility of substituting voluntary participation for "informed consent" as a precondition of ethical research work.[3]

Claude Levi-Strauss also saw increases participation or a revised research relationship as a solution to the oppression of the research design. He envisioned that cultures going through "modernization" should take over the research process: "For anthropology is the science of culture as seen from the outside and the first concern of people made aware of their independent existence and originality must be to claim the right to observe their culture themselves from the inside."[4]

Margaret Mead and Claude Levi-Stauss are, of course, anthropologists, and representatives of a school of thought in which desire for information on cultures is sufficient justification for research. Application of the research information for the improvement of the "natives' " life was/is considered appealing and laudable, but not requisite for ethical research. (Of course, there are numerous action-oriented, applied anthropologists working today, but their activities will not be discussed in this paper.) This failure to commit

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[3]Margaret Mead, "Research with Human Beings: A Model Derived from Anthropological Field Practice", Daedalus, Vol.98, No.2 (Spring, 1969), p.361.

[4]Levi-Strauss, op.cit., p.126.

one's research to application - even to abhor application - has left many of the lessons of anthropology under-utilized by developers.

By 1946 Unesco was established and together with numerous private international organizations had begun educational development projects. These projects, through the use of various pedagogical strategies for disseminating information, planned to improve the quality of life of the "native" in the project area. Research had to be tied to application, because much had to be known about the needs of the population and the success of the project. However, many questioned the smoothness-of-fit between the research and the application: rarely did research provide information to assist the operation of this project. One reason for this discontinuity was that the research design, the strategy for implementation of the project and the leadership of the project were invariably imported from the "developed" nations and co ination between management and the research component was poor. The research designs were usually developed by sociologists who concentrated on quantitative problems - how many people were at what level of nutrition, or how many children had died before the age of five. The intended beneficiaries, the "natives", were counted and described through Western methods in ways that made sense in a Western, literate society. The "natives" were again treated as objects - this time the objects of aid.

This assistance was inefficient and as early as 1963 scholars and development analysts were making statements such as that of Alexander H. Leighton:

> When someone writes the history of efforts by great nations to aid in the development of smaller nations, he will be tempted to call it "How to Back Wrong Horses".[5]

[5] Ward Hunt Goodenough, Cooperation in Change, (New York: Russell Sage, 1963), p.7.

It was discovered that developers were connecting with the wrong people, often working on the wrong problems and failing to improve the lives of community members.

Numerous solutions to these problems have been posed, usually with varying degrees and levels of increased participation as the ameliorating ingredient. For instance, Francis J. Method has suggested that educational researchers must begin to ask questions of values and motivation rather than the "...aggregative and evaluative/descriptive research" questions presently being answered. This type of research would require participation of the insider - the research would:

> ...probably require a different relationship between researchers and research institutions and the researched....Much more of this research must be done by local researchers and through local institutions than has been the case to date. This is suggested for three reasons: (1) much of this research involves sensitive issues that may be difficult for the "outsider", including unfamiliar national researchers, to grasp; (2) as research attempts to assess values and motivation, considerably more insight into the local behaviour and local perceptions will be necessary for the interpretation of results; and (3) much, if not most, of the necessary information will not be accessible to the short-term researcher of "off-shore" scholar ...much of the most important research can only be done by extensive field work (including follow-up and tracer studies) and close contact with local communities, families and leaders.[6]

Others, most notably the Congress of the United States, argue for increased monitored participation at the "grass-roots" level of the developing country. Developers would monitor a process in which the "people" are the decision-makers, equally share the benefits of growth and implement the project.

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[6] Francis J. Method, "National Research and Development Capabilities in Education", Education and Development Reconsidered (Praeger Publishers, 1974), p.138.

This statement by twenty-five Repbulican Congressmen in support of Title IX of the 1966 Foreign Assistance Act, conveys the rationale for "grass-roots" participation:

> ...Unless the people benefit from development efforts, no meaningful probress can result from foreign aid. It is equally true that unless the people contribute to development efforts, no meaningful progress can result from foreign aid.[7]

We would be remiss not to mention development analysts such as Freire, Illich and Goulet, who are structuring a philosophy or "new moral order" of development and contributing much to the discussion of research and participation. Their emphasis is on production of a new relationship between "developed" and "developing" nations: a relationship of collaboration, reciprocity, and equity. This equity requires work on the "grass-roots" level with those affected by the project as well as on the government level.

Freire has had much to say about the native-as-object approach and has stated that checklists and quantitative measures are insufficient when the reality of people is to be defined:

> The concrete reality for many social scientists is a list of particular facts that they would like to capture; for example, the presence or absence of water, problems concerning erosion in the area or those of production or productivity. For me, the concrete reality is something more than isolated facts. In my view, thinking dialectically, the concrete consists not only of concrete facts and (physical) things, but also includes the way in which the people involved with these facts perceive them. Thus in the last analysis, for the concrete reality is the connection between subjectivity and objectivity; never objectivity isolated from subjectivity.[8]

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[7] David Hapgood, The Role of Popular Participation in Development: Report of a Conference on the Implementation of Title IX of the Foreign Assistance Act, June 24-August 2, 1968 (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1969), p.22.

[8] Paulo Freire, "Research Methods", Literacy Discussion (Teheran: The International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods, Spring, 1974), p.134.

Freire insists on a new research relationship - the native as researcher:

> ...I have to go back, and instead of taking the people as the object of my research I must try, on the contrary, to have the people dialogically involved also as subjects, as researchers with me....Thus, in doing research, I am educating and being educated with the people...[9]

From this short sketch it should be clear that the forces producing the demand for something called "participatory research" are numerous and compelling. What is required is a research situation or process which:

(1) changes the subject-as-object research approach;

(2) asks questions concerning values and motivation rather than or as well as quantifiable factors;

(3) facilitates the design, implementation and interpretation of research by insiders;

(4) provides for development of reciprocity among researchers, insiders, and agencies; and

(5) permits the benefits of the research to be felt by the insider/"native".

What does all this mean to research before, during and after development projects? How can untrained "insiders" carry out sophisticated research designs, let alone conceive them? What does the increase of participation of the "native" in the decision-making, implementation and sharing of the benefits in a development project mean? How can the "scientific researcher" justify the impingement of the "insider's" subjectivity on the research process? How can participation, if accepted as a valid goal, be obtained from people not accustomed to such interaction? What methods can be used to insure participation?

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[9] Ibid., p.135.

These questions and the requirements for the "new" research design listed above are those of the practitioners working to develop the concept and methodology of participatory research. The fact that participation is a North American, Western European ideal for a pluralistic society and the fact that research is defined through rationalistic, Western conception of science make the task of the participatory researcher even more difficult in societies that adhere to neither concept. They perceive neither the benefits of participation nor the desirability of research. The developers of participatory research have a profoundly difficult job in addressing all these questions and factors, but the questions are the essence of the problems facing all operations in corss-cultural development situations.

Purpose of this study

Perhaps what many exploring the possibilities of participatory research are looking for is a recipe book in which situations can be categorized and matched with appropriate action. For example, if you start at the point of selection of research methods, you can best maximize the participation of the client by using _____ method. However, I suggest that on investigation this approach reveals itself to be not nearly as useful as it appears. As we frantically search for alternatives to dead-end research methods, we must recognize that research solutions tend to be too situation-specific with human subjects for this approach to work well. A more productive approach is to explore the philosophical stances and resulting behaviours which produce an environment conducive to participation.

Participation evolves from individuals' perceptions of their situation. Whether the right (permission) to participation is encouraged, given or taken, the participant must be aware that involvement is possible.

The researcher must be able to make room, give encouragement or have the right to participation taken, or participation will not take place, no matter which research methodology is used.

Central to this question of receptivity to participation is the researcher's attitude toward science. Is it the absolute rightness of objective truth as defined by Western man or can there be sympathy to the "ghosts" of other peoples? Who can borker in knowledge and again who can define knowledge, fact, or truth? The researcher can operate with any view of the world, but that view impinges on the researcher's ability to see, hear, and value what a people is saying, possibly producing a deafness which precludes participation.

A corollary element of the appropriate research environment for participatory research is the characteristics of the researcher. As suggested above, the researcher has control of the research environment by virtue of his/her position and has the power to allow and encourage participation. While conceivable, rarely does a group initiate research. More realistically, the researcher must promote participation and his/her personal, interactional characteristics are major elements in the success of the promotion.

Linked with the world view and personal characteristics of the researcher are the choices the researcher makes in terms of method. Certain views of what is scientific have led to development of quantitative measures, while other views about the nature of reality have led to qualitative descriptions. Clearly, "research methods have ideological implications"[10] and reflect the ideology of those selecting them.

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[10] Budd Hall, "Participatory Research: An Approach for Change", Convergence, VIII, 2 (1975), p.29.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, will be to discuss what philosophical understandings and resulting behaviours will produce and environment conducive to participation or conducive to accepting the definitions of reality of the people involved in the research process. To this end, the following issues will be discussed: (1) how the value system of the researcher influences the possibility of participation; (2) how the personal characteristics and interactional patterns of the researcher influence the quality of participation; and, (3) how the research methods effect the nature of the participation.

A detour in search of a definition

The words "participatory research" give little clue as to what developers of the concept are talking about. Participation in our society can be much different from the participatory interactions of other societies. Since the concept depends on a relativistic view of all societies, it is impossible to say that "participation means..." for all cultures.

"Research", also, is used in a "fuzzy" way. The developers are not talking about all research, but about research carried out within a development project. This means that the information obtained through research is expected to be applied. What results is a confusion between evaluation and research, or perhaps a planned ambiguity between the two enterprises. Evaluation has been defined as "decision-oriented research", while educational research is "conclusion-based".[11] These distinctions can be lost when all research is expected to be

[11] Coleman et al., Research for Tomorrow's Schools: Disciplined Inquiry for Education (New York: MacMillan, 1969), p.20-21.

applied to some action in a development project. However, most researchers consider their work as distinctly different from that of an evaluator. For example, Gene V. Glass, states the differences are:

> ...that educational evaluation attempts to assess the worth of a thing and education research attempts to assess the scientific truth of a thing. Except that truth is highly valued and hence that which possesses it is worthy, this distinction serves fairly to discriminate research and evaluation. The distinction can be made less ambiguous if "worth" is taken as synonomous with "social utility" (which increases with increases in health, happiness, life expectancy, etc., and decreases with increases in privation, sickness, ignorance, etc.) and if "scientific truth" is identified with two of its many forms: (1) empirical verifiability of a general phenomenon with accepted methods of inquiry; (2) logical consistency. The distinction between assessing worth (evaluation) and scientific truth (research) so defined now takes on more meaning.
>
> Evaluation is that activity which seeks directly to assess social utility. Research may yield evidence of social utility, but only indirectly - because empirical verifiability of a general phenomenon and rational consistency may eventually be of substantial social utility....[12]

Clearly, contemporary educational research thought does make a distinction between research and evaluation, but this is not a field of discussion that developers of participatory research have felt necessary to enter.

At this point, it will be useful to look at the forming definition of participatory research. Budd Hall in his article, "Participatory Research: An Approach for Change", offers no definition but lists a series of principles, from which one can infer a definition. They are as follows:

1. Research methods have ideological implications.

2. A research process should be of some immediate and direct benefit

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[12]Gene V. Glass, "The Growth of Evaluation Methodology" (Boulder: Laboratory of Educational Research, University of Colorado, n.d.), pp.11-12, reproduced....

to a community and not merely the basis for an academic paper.

3. A research process should involve the community or population in the entire research project from the formulation of the problem to the discussion of how to seek solutions and the interpretation of the findings.
4. If the goal of the research is change, then the research team should be composed of representatives of all elements in the situation that have a bearing on the change.
5. The research process should be seen as part of a total educational experience which serves to establish community needs, and increases awareness and commitment within the community.
6. The research process should be viewed as a dialectic process, a dialogue over time and not a static picture from one point in time.
7. The object of the research process, like the object of the educational process, should be the liberation of human creative potential and the mobilization of human resources for the solution of social problems.

The words participatory research make me nervous when attached to these principles, because it's clear that much more is meant than participation and research. The words become jargon which is dangerous in a world where disciplines haven't a vocabulary to talk to each other. Involved in these principles are research, pedagogy and mobilization and it is not clear what purpose is served by combining the three operations into one concept. Further, some of the outcomes described in these principles - the goal of research is change, liberation of human potential, etc. - are not clearly the results of participation or of research. Neither research nor participation can produce change

without appropriate action in an environment supportive of that action; humans liberate themselves in a time and space appropriate to themselves. To load "participatory research" with these mystical powers may make the package too heavy to be functional and obscure the usefulness of adding the dimension of participation to research.

I find it more useful to look at participatory research as a process towards gathering new knowledge with the people capable of defining that knowledge. The key word in this statement is "defining", and the key consideration is who gets the power to do that defining. Participatory research represents an effort to share or give over this power to the "native" - an enormous departure from the past in which only the researcher could define reality or truth or knowledge.

Not only is the question of who defined central, but also important are the questions of definition by what methods, recorded by whom and for what purpose. The question of definitional propriety emerges at the beginning of the research endeavour as the researcher asks who has the right to define the situation as appropriate for research. The questioning continues throughout the research process as someone defines what problem requires research, by what method that problem will be researched, how accurate the information/data is, how to interpret the data and how to apply that interpretation. Those working toward the ideal of participaroty research would like to answer each question by reference to the "people", those who are affected by the proposed research. These supporters reason that each significant definitional point in the research process should be controlled by the "native" of the target area.

Even if we accept the above goal of making the "native" the researcher and definer of reality, we still come up with a big "how". To be unclear about what research is, what we/they are looking for, makes the "how"

even more obscure. There must be a clearer understanding of what participation in reserach means before the "how" can be adequately developed.

Their ghosts or ours

As stated above, in the past, scientific research was defined by a researcher trained to believe that s/he had screened out subjective input. Contemporary epistemologists maintain that objectivity has always been a myth and that what the researcher reports is his/her subjective observations and ordering of reality. To accept the implications of this relativistic view and take the extra step of committing oneself to focusing on the subjectivity of the "native" requires a philosophical stance in which the "ghosts" of the "native" are valued as much as our "ghosts" of scientific research.

To be able to allow the expression of or definition of reality of a people to be the findings of research requires a particular perspective regarding the nature of science and scientific research. In the recent past, many scientists have worked on the "development-by-accumulation"[14] theory, that scientific thought is developed through ever refined analysis of ever refined data as scientific truth is approached. Adherents to this school of thought are irritated by the subjective nature of self-definition and argue for "...increasing elaborate techniques...often based on sophisticate statistical procedures, the overall effect of which have been to increase the gap between the researcher and his subject of study."[15]

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[14] Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p.2.

[15] Michael Pilsworth and Ralph Ruddock, "Some Criticisms of Social Research Methods in Adult Education", Convergence, 8,2,1975, p.33.

A second school of thought points out that scientific method has been subjective all along, merely masquerading as objective, making what is known as uncertain because it is clouded by subjective input. Thomas S. Kuhn makes this point, as he discusses:

> ...the insufficiency of methodological directives, by themselves, to dictate a unique substantive conclusion to many sorts of scientific questions. Instructed to examine electrical or chemical phenomena, the man who is ignorant of these fields but who knows what it is to be scientific may legitimately reach any one of a number of incompatible conclusions. Among those legitimate possibilities, the particular conclusions he does arrive at are probably determined by his prior experience in other fields, by the accidents of his investigation, and by his own individual makeup....the early developmental stages of most sciences have been characterized by continual competition between a number of distinct views of nature, each partially derived from, and all roughly compatible with, the dictates of scientific observation and method...an apparently arbitrary element, compounded of personal and historical accident, is always a formative ingredient of the beliefs espoused by a given scientific community at a given time.[16]

If we accept that "personal and historic accident" is an element of the research process, we must develop much more humility as researchers. Further, as democratic beings, we must leave room for others to express their personal and historic perspectives. Acknowledging that "...the experimenter is part of the experimental system"[17], we must allow the subject to be a part as well, so that the subject's perspective - the object of the research - can be expressed audibly.

This expression on the part of the subject can be lost through the intimidation of rationality - the hypothesis, the theory, the method, etc. If our own goal is knowledge of a people, then we must somehow get around this intimidation. As Berger and Luckman state:

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[16]Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp.3-4.

[17]Jean-Paul Satre, Search for a Method (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p.32.

> To exaggerate the importance of theoretical thought in society and history is a natural failing of theorizers. It is then all the more necessary to correct this intellectualistic misapprehension. The theoretical formulations of reality, whether they be scientific or philosophical or even mythological, do not exhaust what is "real" for the members of a society. Since this is so, the sociology of knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people "know as reality" in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other workds, commonsense "knowledge" rather than "ideas" must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this "knowledge" that constitutes the fabric of meanings withour which no society could exist.[18]

This knowledge, this "fabric of meaning" is not a commodity easy to understand, measure or even describe. The evidence of Western intervention and disruption in radically different cultures indicates that we have failed to obtain this knowledge for whatever reason. Many argue that the major reason is Western man's failure to see beyond his rituals revolving around the god of science. As in this statement attributed to Albert Einstein, Western man has retreated into the cosmos of science to avoid the world of experience where true scientific knowledge is found:

> ...The supreme task...is to arrive at those universal elementary laws from which the cosmos can be built up by pure deduction. There is no logical path to these laws; only intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding of experience, can reach them....[19]

The valuing of intuition and sympathetic understanding is a requirement for the researcher who would aspire to listen to a subject to mutually develop knowledge. The requirement is essentially that of dealing with the structures of the other's world in an inductive matter or, as Mezirow suggests: "the science and art of knowing what we see may be somewhat less exact that that

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[18]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luchman, The Social Construction of Reality (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), p.15.

[19]Robert M. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1974), p.106.

available to help us see what we know, but it probably has far greater relevance to professional understanding."[20]

Characteristics of the Researcher: Ethnocentrism of Reciprocity

The researcher, given his/her definition of what is scientific, sets up the ground rules. For this reason, the researcher determines if what happens in participatory research is scientific, structures the participation and gives or denies the right (permission) to participate. Nat Colletta underscores this point as he reflects on his efforts in participatory research in Indonesia: "We had brought together a group that would probably have never collected to discuss ideas that may never have occurred to them."[21] Participation is not a natural phenomenon, nor is it an unalienable right given by a constitution, but rather a value held or denied by the researcher: for a series of reasons participation is better or worse than non-involvement in the mind of the researcher.

Once the researcher has determined that there is something to be gained through the subject's involvement in research, he/she still has the problem of implementation: participation requires the active self-involvement of the subject. Again, to activate this involvement, the participant must believe that such effort is possible and valuable. This information is transmitted by the researcher through his/her behaviours and strategies for research. For this reason, several characteristics are important for the researcher to develop. Probably the most important is the belief in and movement toward reciprocity.

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[20]Jack Mezirow, "Toward a Theory of Practice", Adult Education Journal, XXI, 3 (1971), p.147.

[21]Nat J. Colletta, "Participatory research or participatory putdown? Reflections on an Indonesian experiment in non-formal education", Convergence , IX, 3 (1976), p.44.

As Denis Goulet states:

> The crucial question is: are encounters to be founded on reciprocity or on domination? Weaker partners reject domination as invalid, and stronger groups can no longer practice it in good conscience or even with realistic hopes of success. Ultimately, reciprocity is necessary for esteem, an idea which has come of age. And reciprocity is the sole basis for non-manipulative relationships.[22]

Such a belief is necessary to establish relationships in which exist a possibility of the participant defining new knowledge. But as Goulet points out:

> ...the relationship can lead to genuine development only if the stronger partner's technical and economic superiority, or the power to impose his cultural values, is somehow neutralized. The mistaken belief that relative superiority is absolute constitutes the principal obstacle to the success of the relationship. Recipients are already vulnerable; donors must become more so. Only then can recipients cease being beggars and donors manipulators. In practice, no one can render himself fully vulnerable: but he can expose himself to the other's area of relative superiority and allow the other to make him vulnerable.[23]

The researcher is the instigator and s/he initiates his/her vulnerability. Goulet offers several suggestions for development toward this vulnerability:

> First, he can acknowledge that his own superiority is but relative superiority, attributed to him in virtue of the ethnocentrism dominant in his own society. Second, he can reflect on the powerlessness of his own knowledge and wealth to answer basic value dilemmas posed by the development process. This should at least make him humble about his skills. Third, he can accede to the same kind of critical consciousness of his own values - usually latent in his programs, policy plan, or image of development - that the weaker partner seeks of his own values.[24]

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[22] Denis Goulet, "An Ethical Model for the Study of Values", Harvard Educational Review, Vol.41, No.2, May, 1971, p.25.

[23] Ibid., p.47.

[24] Ibid., p.46.

I have emphasized the role of the researcher as giver of the right to participate, because I believe that it influences the interaction between the researcher and the research subject and their movement towards reciprocity. However, of eminent importance is the ability of the researcher to understand what the participants define as reality, to hear what the participants articulate. Such understanding is veiled by the ethnocentrism every human being experiences by virtue of being born and socialized into a social structure. To rend the veil requires time and "...great sensitivity and self-awareness on the part of the investigator. The field worker is his own principal research instrument...."[25] Data from other instruments used are interpreted by this ultimate instrument: the researcher.

Refinement of the researcher's skills hinges, among other things, on (1) being aware of what assumptions one is carrying into research, and (2) understanding one's observational style. Both require a commitment to constant refinement, because assumptions change and perceptions alter when a human interacts with the environment and other humans: one must constantly be assessing what is happening.

The importance of stating and examining assumptions can be explored through the example of the assumption of most North Americans about the nature of democracy and participation. As stated by Glen Dealy: "North Americans feel that the basis of true democracy is political pluralism: that is, the representation and propagation of a plurality of interests."[26] It's not surprising that such is the belief because the North American countries were founded in

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[25] Boulet, p.46.

[26] Glen Dealy, "The Tradition of Monistic Democracy in Latin America", Politics and Social Change in Latin America: The Distinct Tradition (University of Massachusetts Press, 1974), p.

diversity with differences more pronounced than any rationale for unity. On the other hand:

> Latin America countries at their inception did have a great deal in common: one king, one system of law and administration, one religion (Judaism and Protestantism were not treated as religions, but as heresies), one military system, one language among their effective governing population, and one general approach towards education.[27]

As a result, most Latin American countries developed under a monistic democratic system: "that is, the centralization and control of potentially competing interests."[28] Clearly, both systems are contradictory and would pose a problem for groups working towards reciprocity. Which political system should be used?

This problem is complicated by the nature of the representation practiced in both systems. "Monistic democrats adhere to the belief that a nation can best be represented when congressmen represent the common good. Liberal or pluralistic democrats, by contrast, tend to favour a representative government whereby congressmen stand for the interests of a defined constituency."[29] Hence, when a North American talks with a "representative" of a monistic political system about looking for a representative of a group, it's not clear that either the North American or the native political boss can be happy with the performance of the "chosen representative" simultaneously.

Nat Colletta describes similar difficulty with his participatory research project in Indonesia, when he began work with the Mayor who had

> ...great concern over who would determine the definition of "participation" in our "participatory research" effort. It became clearer in his mind, and ours, that the definition of participation "Indonesian style" was a bit different than what we had envisioned. Our visions were of villagers, heads of households, the "grass-roots"; his was that of village officials, government employees working in the district, and

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[27] Ibid., p.74-75.
[28] Ibid., p.73.
[29] Dealy, p.89.

some of his staff.[30]

It is not clear that Indonesia is working under any form of democratic rule, but a political system was functioning which Colletta did not perceive as appropriately participatory.

The idea that democracy should allow for pluralistic expression is a North American ideal and an assumption not shared by numerous countries which perceive themselves as operating under a democratic political system. It's important that the researcher be aware of his/her assumptions as s/he initiates a participatory research process, because such a process may:

(1) require a break with established political procedure,
(2) require training of participants in representational behaviour, and
(3) require behaviour not supportable by present political structures.

I'm not suggesting that it's appropriate or inappropriate for a developer to train "natives" to act like U.S. democrats. But I am suggesting that what is involved in the desired behaviour be clearly understood. Assumptions must be clear so that what is seen is clearer. The failure of a Latin American to elect political representatives has less to do with that Latino's level of consciousness and more to do with the political system in which he operates. Or, what could be seen as a perverse attempt at maintenance of the status quo, can also be seen as unfamiliarity with a political process. When something is not as it is assumed it should be, the assumption should be clarified and examined to better determine the appropriate action.

Hinging on this need to state and examine assumptions is the need for

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[30]Colletta, p.40.

the researcher to be aware of his/her own observational style. "He should practice observing and recording events in order to discover his observational biases and to develop more systematic techniques of recall."[31]

For example, the researcher should be aware of which of his/her assumptions cause him/her to concentrate on one aspect of a group as opposed to another. What the theoretical orientation causes the researcher to look at, for instance, the power relationship of the men as opposed to who holds in which situation in a society, also deserves attention. The observation of live interaction between people is usually too exciting to trust to haphazard reporting. "Field work requires much more than simply 'being there' and passively watching what people are about."[32]

Both clarification of assumptions and understanding of one's observational limitations are part of a movement towards attrition of ethnocentrism. Both are attempts to delineate which categories are ours and which are theirs and to understand how our categories colour our observation. The desire for this understanding is an important characteristic of a researcher interested in obtaining new knowledge about a people. As Thomas Rhys Williams explains about the experience of anthropologists:

> Anthropologists undergo a wearing away of their own cultural ethnocentrism as they develop the ability to move easily in and out of culture categories known to another people. As they have learned to respond to new cues of emotion, develop appreciation for strange foods, become accustomed to alien intonations and alien concerns, anthropologists have evolved a relativistic attitude toward man and culture that is vital in their research. Cultural relativity means that any social form or act has to be understood as a part of the whole of the

[31] Peritti J. Pelto, Anthropological Research: The Structure of Inquiry (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p.92.

[32] Pelto, p.92.

> culture in which it occurs. The attitude or relativism is one of being liberated from the parochial truths of one culture to a freedom to be concerned with the diversity of human knowledge and experience, with all of its discords, its powerful and pervasive heterogeneity, and its dissents and divergence. The attitude of relativism is one of being freed from local orthodoxies and "eternal" verities. It is a sense of liberation from the constricting bonds of race, class, and time. The denial of the authenticity of any one culture's claim to final veracity tends to shape, direct, and colour all study of culture.[33]

This desire for attrition of ethnocentrism is an important characteristic of a researcher attempting participatory research. The researcher must be able to hear his/her own ethnocentric assumptions to be able to hear the definition a people gives to its own reality. No field methods will "work" if the researcher is not refining his/her ultimate research instrument: his/herself.

There are no ready-made instruments[34]

As Hall suggests, "research methods have ideological implications."[35] I believe this is so because of the relative amount of projection allowed to the researcher. Some methods, such as life history recording allow the subject maximum interpretation of his/her life. Others, such as that used by Colletta to measure the level of participation ("...each resource person was given a sample scale of 1-4 ((very active, active, adequately active, and passive)) to rate both the frequency of individual opinion expression and the degree of individual participation of any kind.")[36] allow the researcher to project on that society his culturally formed idea of what participation. Colletta, by using this method,

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[33]Thomas Rhys Williams, Field Methods in the Study of Culture (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p.61.

[34]Pelto, p.90.

[35]Hall, p.28.

[36]Colletta, p.41.

shut himself off from understanding what possibly could have been a much more complex system of participation, not reducible to the number of tines a person opened his/her mouth or nodded his/her head.

Examination of the obtuseness of projective tests such as that used by Colletta usually results in a discussion of the pros and cons of qualitative vs. quantitative methods. However, it's not an either/or situation; rather, quantitative methods must build on the information developed through qualitative methods. This need is particularly acute in research done with pre-literate groups, where those groups have not been defining themselves audibly in a retrievable fashion. In short, the researcher goes into the field with little or no knowledge on which to base his/her interview formats, questionnaires and projective tests. This situation of non-preparation results in the researcher projecting his/her own culture into his/her quantitative instruments.

Sociological methods are more appropriate for description of a Western, literate population than for interpretation of a non-Western pre-literate population.[37] On the other hand, anthropology, with its heavy reliance on qualitative methods such as participant observation and informant collaboration, provides a procedure for obtaining vital, first hand information not available on most non-literate groups. In this situation - that of the non-literate group - "...the preliminary data from participant observations provides the fieldworker with insights and clues necessary for developing questionnaires, psychological tests, or other more specialized research tools."[38]

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[37]This statement is based on a discussion with Dr. Benjamin Dennis, Professor of Sociology, University of Michigan, Flint.

[38]Pelto, p.91.

The emphasis on self-definition in participatory research corresponds to the emphasis on listening and observing inherent in the participant observation method. But, however appealing and emotionally satisfying this procedure is, it has several drawbacks which have made if nonfunctional for use in traditional educational research in the past. First, the method requires time and immersion in an alien culture. Second, researchers must be able to work in the language of the people. Third, researchers must be trained in the method, but also be able to think in terms of educational application. Anthropologists are usually trained to think of change strategies and application as "impure" infringements on the research process. Finally, development agencies have not given educational research high priority and, hence, extended field work has not appeared appropriate.

Before throwing out any method for any utilitarian reason, though, let's look at what is required for a participatory research method, and then rethink what is functional. The following three research method characteristics, I believe, are necessary to carry out participatory research:

(1) The time allowed to the research process must be sufficient to deal with the complexity of the problem.

The quality of participatory research relies on the quality of relations developed between the subjects and researchers and quality relationships require time to build. Surveys, questionnaires and interviews are appealing, because they can be administered in a short time, but many question the usefulness of the resultant data (see Hall[39] and Pilsworth[40]). As E.S. Webb states:

> Interviews and questionnaires intrude as a foreign element into the social setting they would describe, they create as

[39] Hall, pp.25-28.

[40] Michael Pilworth and Ralph Ruddick, "Some criticisms of Survey Research Methods in Adult Education", Convergence VIII, 2 (1976), pp.33-43.

> well as measure attitudes, they elicit atypical roles and responses, they are limited to those who are accessible and will co-operate, and the responses obtained are produced in part by dimensions of individual differences to the topic at hand.[41]

Survey research has also been termed "...alienating, dominating or oppressive in character."[42] Hall states, "...((survey research)) extracts information from individuals in isolation from one another and aggregates this into a single set of figures (and) does so at the expense of reducing the complexity and richness of human experience."[43]

These methods require that artificial relationships be developed so that "information" can be obtained. Participatory research, on the other hand, requires that the subject analyze and present information. To encourage such action, the researcher "...must establish relations of confidence with informants. Confidence comprises both trust and the willingness of interlocuters to confide or divulge intimate thoughts."[44] Adult human beings don't easily give this trust. An appropriate amount of time must be allotted to this development.

> (2) The method must allow for reflection "...conducted jointly by researchers and members of a culture if the distortion produced by fragmentation of value patterns is to be reduced."[45]

All societies operate in complex patterns. The researcher can easily oversimplify if s/he is not involved in "checking over" the information with those capable of illuminating the complexity. The participants must be final determiners of accuracy.

> (3) The research process must be a permanent sequence of analysis, statement, action, reflection analysis, etc.

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[41] F.J. Webb et al., Unobtrusive Measures: Non-reactive Research in the Social Sciences (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971), p.1.

[42] Hall, p.26.

[43] Ibid., p.25.

[44] Goulet, p.51.

If participatory researcy (by implication) contains steps of research, pedagogy and mobilization, there must he a strategy to go from phase to phase. Paulo Freire and Georges Allo describe two different sequences for the process: Freire insists on action as an important element, while Allo takes a less intrusive position. Freire urges a structure for advancing from stage to stage and diagrams this structure as:

$$\begin{matrix}\text{Action} \\ \text{Reflection}\end{matrix}\Big\{\quad \text{word=work=praxis}^{46}$$

Freire describes the investigation (could be translated research) of the generative theme as going through:

(1) analysis of the situation with the subject

(2) selection of the important theme

(3) codification of the theme

(4) presentation of the theme

(5) analysis of the theme

(6) action on the theme

(7) reflection on action[47]

Georges Allo, French philosopher and change theorist, in his scheme for exploration of values, suggests the following sequence:

> (1) Preliminary systhesis: The investigator solicits from natural leaders in a cummunity and from popular spokesmen, having no influence beyond their limited kinship or affective circles, their perception of what their total human existential situation is, what it means, and what it ought to he ...

[46] Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p.75.

[47] Ibid., p.76-118.

(2) Systematic observation. Under ideal conditions, systematic observation should then take place at four different levels. The first is that of primary groups or sub-systems constituting natural units of daily life. General observation can be conducted, for instance, on all aspects of life in a village or among an itinerant tribe. A second level of observation is some limited sector of activity such as work, recreation, worship, or family relations. Third, there is the cultural system as a whole, whether it be the belief system (cognitive values), or the set of norms, patterns of interaction, or the total network of social forces affecting cohesion and disruption. A fourth level touches upon the broad world-view, or philosophy of life...

(3) Reflective systhesis by the research team. The third stage in the process is the elaboration by the research team of a reflective, critically conscious synthesis, as distinct from the naive synthesis of the first stage...

(4) Feedback of reflective synthesis to populace. The final stage of the normative sequence consists in resubmitting the critical synthesis obtained in Stage 3 to the informants who provided the naive synthesis in Stage 1. The choice of appropriate terms and symbols evidently depends on prolonged interaction between the research team and a representative portion of the interested populace...[48]

The sequence stops short of action for Allo since "... the research team never arrogates to itself the right to interpret the problems of the native populace..."[49] However, if the developers of the participatory research process define application as a goal, someone must interpret the problems and begin action for resolution of the problems: there must be a strategy for praxis if the goals of the application of the participatory research are to be reached.

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[48] Goulet, p50-52.

[49] Ibid., p.52.

Methods that include or allow for these elements - sufficient time for development of authentic relations, a mode for reflection and a permanent sequence for praxis - influence and amplify the nature of participation. These methods permit and encourage group definition (research), but usually do not lend themselves to short term use : this research mode requires that the research process continue throughout the developer's interaction with the community. Participatory research cannot be reduced to a three-day workshop or a run through the community surveying randomly selected households. Rather, the effort to develop participatory research signifies that many researchers are willing to use strategies that finally reflect the complexity of the society being "assisted". The search for these strategies is a search for ways of developing reciprocity between peoples - a sign that our relations are coming of age.

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These papers represent ideas and work in progress. They have been stimulated or supported by the work of the Participatory Research Project. The project, within the International Council for Adult Education, has as its goal the study and dissemination of information about research processes which focus on popular groups in the exploration and transformation of their own reality.

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